

## FRAMING BASICS

One of the pitfalls of novice filmmaking is poor picture composition, also known as framing. The basic purpose of framing a shot is to present images as clearly as possible and show the subject so that it conveys meaning and energy. Every time you frame a subject you are telling a story to your audience. An example would be a simple dialogue scene between a father and son, and you frame the father in a close-up so he is made to look imposing, while framing the son further away in a more neutral medium shot. So size selection, from a wide shot all the way to an extreme close-up of your subject becomes important.

You will also need to consider headroom and nose room when framing your subject. Headroom is the space between the top of the actor's head and the top of the video frame. Nose room refers to the space between the actor's nose and the edge of the frame (where he is facing). Shots with too little or too much head/nose room tend to look out of balance.



The Rule of Thirds is a concept in film and video in which the camera frame is divided into thirds, both vertically and horizontally. Key subject elements are usually placed on these lines, so when framing people, the eyes of the person are usually aligned on the top horizontal line. This is a good gauge in determining headroom as well.



The background images in the video frame are also something you should consider. A poor background choice can distract the viewer and take away from your production. "Busy" backgrounds that have a lot of movement or a background that is more brightly lit than the main subject matter will inadvertently attract the audience's attention.

When framing for an interview, choosing backgrounds that are interesting but not distracting is important. White walls or other generic backgrounds don't add anything to the video or its story. The background should say something about the person or subject matter. You should also pay attention to where the subject is placed in relation to the background. A person who is speaking but has a tree behind them might have branches that seem like they are coming out of the subject's head, for example.

Good luck with your field shoots, and remember that good framing adds to your story and production values.